The OSD Functional Files System

The records disposition schedules contained in enclosure 4 to this Instruction are arranged according to a "functional" file system; that is, according to the major functions by which they will be arranged for filing and retrieval. This is the only type of filing system authorized in the OSD. This enclosure outlines in detail how to create and maintain such a filing system.

A. Files Planning. Planning the proper location of files so they are arranged in a manner that will facilitate their use and disposition is the first step in effectively maintaining records. . Primary planning considerations are maximizing ease of reference-to the file-s, minimizing duplication of records, preserving permanent records, and systematically disposing of all others.

B. File Plan Designation. A decentralized and specialized file plan shall be used within the OSD. Under this plan, documents that are accumulated and used in performing a function shall be located in the organizational element performing the function.

1. Specialized files of OSD-wide interest and use may be centrally located. The OSD Components may establish centralized file systems in their organizations if they are more effective and convenient.

2. The OSD Components shall establish written procedures stating or explaining where the record copies are filed. Each such location is known as an office of record.

3. Each office of record is responsible for the custody, maintenance, retirement, and disposition of current documents of the office it serves.

4. The following factors shall be considered in designating offices of record:

a. Access. Records kept sufficiently accessible to the using activities so that maintenance of duplicate files is unnecessary.

b. Security. Classified material maintained in security containers or secured areas established in accordance with DoD 5200.1-R (reference (h)).

c. Space. Adequate space for present and anticipated needs, including the safety, health, and morale of records personnel. Offices storing large quantities of records shall be given fire protection and shall be designated as nonsmoking areas.

d. Arrangement. Files equipment and supplies positioned to provide control, smooth workflow, and convenience to the maximum number of users. Classified files and containers shall be located away from windows and doors to prevent illicit acquisition of, or unauthorized access to, classified information (AI 27, (reference (o)). Files requiring protection because they contain privacy information will be handled and arranged in accordance with DoD Directive 5400.11 (reference (k)).

C. Records Evaluation. There are two types of records: temporary and permanent (see enclosure 3, Definitions). Temporary. records are disposed of in the current files area (CFA) or at a Federal Records Center after a specified period of time. Permanent records are eventually accessioned by the National Archives and Records Administration, at which time they cease to be the property of the originating agency. The value of records is not necessarily determined by how long they will be kept -- many relatively short-term documents (personnel and health records for instance) are extremely important although they do not document the operation of the Federal government, which is a major criterion for permanent records. The evaluation process is participative and includes the document creator, the Records Management Division, and NARA evaluators, if required (see Figs. 5-1 and 5-2).

D. Documentation and File Arrangement. Documentation concerns the creation of records and the assembly or consolidation of these papers in proper sequence. Effective documentation ensures a complete account of actions taken, commitments made, and results achieved. File arrangement is simply the relative positioning of records in a file. Effective file arrangement produces easy retrieval and disposal of documents.

E. Basic File Groups

1. Subject Files. These are files arranged according to their' general content, or papers on the same topic brought together in one place to make finding them easier. Subject files consist mainly of general correspondence but may also include forms , reports, and other material that relate to programs and functions but not to specific cases. The purpose of the subject file is to provide complete documentation in the appropriate subject functional area. An example of subject files is office administration files which are broken down into policy, instruction, agreement, committee, staff visit, and reference paper subject categories.

2. Case or Project Files. A case or project file contains material on a specific action, transaction, event, person, project, or other subject. Case files may cover one or several subjects that relate to a particular case. A contract file maintained by an Agency contracting office for example might contain proposals, bids, addenda, inspection reports, payment authorizations, correspondence, and legal papers. An Agency contract monitor, on the other hand, would keep a case file containing copies of interim and final technical reports, memorandums, correspondence, and other documents on a contractor's performance and production of a specified deliverable. Another familiar example of a case file is the Official Personnel File. Case filing is the most efficient method for filing and using large quantities of records. The NARA estimates (1983) that 85 percent of all Federal records are arranged as case files.

a. The documents may cover one or more subjects. on a case or project but will always be filed by a specific title or number.

b. A distinguishing feature of a case or project file is the similarity in nature of the papers within the case folders.

c. Papers are arranged within each case file in chronological order with the most recent papers placed at the front of the file folder.

d. Case or project files are closed upon occurrence of an event or action and placed in an inactive file. Examples of events or actions that would result in placing a file in inactive status would be the decease or separation of personnel, a final contract payment, or project completion.

e. Case files may be filed alphabetically by name, title, country, organization, or numerically to permit ease of filing and finding, without resorting to special finding aids such as indexes and guide cards maintained separately.

3. Reference Files. Sometimes called convenience files or working files, may include extra copies of documents that are officially recorded elsewhere, such as books, pamphlets, and catalogs. These files should be reviewed periodically to retain only those that are current and of significant reference value.

F. Filing Arrangements. The first step in arranging a group of files is to determine the major functional categories that apply. These are listed in the main body of this

Instruction. Assistance is also available from the Records Management Division in helping make this determination. After selecting the major functions file grouping, a method of arranging each group is selected based on the primary function by which the file will be requested. Within the basic arrangement selected, one or more arrangements for further breakdown or subdivision may be used. For example, geographically arranged records may be arranged further by organization; records filed by subject may be arranged chronologically. This is optional with the office requiring the creation of specific files, provided they use one of the following systems:

1. Numerical Arrangement. This system is used to arrange files identified and referred to by number, such as bills of lading, requisitions, and purchase orders.

2. Chronological Arrangement. This system is used to arrange files in date sequence when the date is the primary means of reference, and is useful for keeping records in small, manageable groups; usually by year, month, day. Reading and suspense files are examples of files arranged by date.

3. Geographical Arrangement. This system is used to arrange files by geographical location, such as area, country, state, or county; it is used when the geographical location is the primary means of reference. The files are arranged first in alphabetical sequence, according to the name of the main geographical area, such as State, then by the next most important subdivision required for reference, such as counties or cities.

4. Organizational Arrangement. This arrangement is used when the name of the organization is the primary means of reference. Organizational arrangement is fundamentally an alphabetical arrangement of organizations as they relate to each other.

5. Alphabetical Arrangement. This system is used to arrange a file by names of persons, companies, or agencies in alphabetical sequence. Articles, conjunctions, and prepositions are disregarded when filing alphabetically.

6. Subject Arrangement. This system is used to arrange files by subject when the subject is the primary means of reference.

7. Functional File System. Under this system, a document is filed by the function to which it relates and not necessarily according to the subject of the document. This is the OSD-preferred system and is further described in paragraph h., below.

G. Records and Files Survev. Each office of record shall prepare a listing identifying each file series of records it maintains. This listing will provide a comprehensive system of identification, maintenance and disposition of documents. In preparing and maintaining the listing, each office of record shall:

1. Forward one copy to their component records management officer.

2. Review the Records Disposition Schedule (see enclosure 4) annually to ensure that all records are properly identified and the schedule is accurate and complete. If revision is deemed necessary, contact the OSD Records Administrator through the component records manager.

H. Functional File Svstem Concept

1. The" OSD functional file system is based on the concept that each element or office maintains records documenting the performance of each of its functions.

2. The functional file system for the OSD is a system for identifying and arranging records, following the principle that identification or coding of records, papers, correspondence, and communications is intertwined with the function that they document. The coding and arrangement of files under this system lend themselves to a more flexible arrangement.

I. Organization of the OSD File System. The organization of OSD functional file system provides for the division and identification of records and documents into several distinct subject series to facilitate referencing and disposition.

1. Series 100 pertains to Office Administration Files. These files relate primarily to the performance of the administrative operations in general or to the normal housekeeping operations of any office.

2. Series 200 and up pertain to the functional files. The first subdivision of each of these functional series is devoted to administrative files on the particular functions as opposed to the general administrative file in series 100.. These series relate to specific major functional or functional subgroup areas' of the OSD. Series identification file number descriptions and instructions for retention and disposition for all the functional file series are contained in Enclosure 4.

J. **Applicability.** The OSD filing system shall apply to all files. Excluded are publications, blank forms, reference materials, books in formally organized and officially designated libraries, and reproduction material, such as stencils and offset masters.

K. Functional Area Numbering System

1. The OSD file system is set up on a functional basis and does not necessarily follow an organization relationship. Following are the present major groups with the appropriate numerical designation:

100	Office Administration (General) and Common Mission Files
200	Administration
300	Comptroller
400	General Counsel
500	Intelligence
600	Reserve Affairs
700	Public Affairs
800	Policy
900	Health Affairs
1000	Legislative Affairs
1100	Command, Control, Communications and Intelligence (C%)
1200	Acquisitions
1300	Research and Engineering
1400	Program Analysis and Evaluation
1500	Atomic Energy
1600	Machine-Readable and Word Processing Files
1700	Court of Military Appeals
1800	Personnel and Readiness
1900	DoD Dependents Schools

2000	Operational Test & Evaluation
2100	Special Operations & Low-Intensity Conflict
2200	DoD Drug Policy Coordinator
2300	On-Site Inspection Agency

2. These major functional groups are further divided into functional subgroups, as shown in the examples below:

305	Audit Files
703	Defense Information

3. A dash is then employed before designating the third category breakdown and a two-digit number, such as 01 or 08, is always used with this category. Examples are:

305-01	Inter-Service Audits
703-01	Media Travel

4. By combining all elements of this numbering system, the following examples demonstrate their composition:

300	Comptroller
305	Audit Files
305-01	Inter-Service Audit Files
305-01.1	DoD Audit Performance Files
1800	Personnel and Readiness Files
1805	Civilian Personnel Policy Files
1805-03	Compensation and Position Management Files

5. Most of these categories are functional breakdowns and not files. A file shall be set up for only the lowest category shown which will always appear as the third or fourth breakdown. Also, for a category actually to be a file, it has to have a description and be included on the disposition schedule as listed in the Records Disposition Schedules (enclosure 4). In the 100 and 200 (Office Administration) series and a few of the remaining categories, files shall be set up for the third major

breakdown such as 101-01.

6. File numbers in the 100 series are common to most offices in the OSD and are described in greater detail in Enclosure 4. The OSD Records Management Division does not designate specific functional files for each office to allow flexibility in setting up specific files under functional areas.

a. A listing of all files kept in an office shall be maintained by the OSD Components. In the 200-up series, the digit numbering system shall be used to designate specific office files.

b. Each office shall determine the functions for which they are primarily responsible and assign numbers to the specific files that office maintains under that function.

L. Files Control

1. The success of any filing system depends upon several steps: arranging guides and folders, preparing and filing materials, retrieving papers in the files and charging them out, keeping the files orderly, and transferring or destroying inactive or useless files in accordance with approved disposition standards.

2. Any system is acceptable that employs the procedures and conforms to the disposition schedules at enclosure 4. However, the procedures explained in paragraph m., below, and illustrated in Figures 5-3 through 5-5 to this enclosure, should be followed as closely as practicable to ensure uniformity and efficiency in storing, retrieving, and disposing of files. Nevertheless, file managers should use discretion and initiative. For instance, file folder labels do not have to be typed but they must be neat and legible. Labels must have all the information required to identify the papers in the folders, but they do not necessarily have to be in the exact format shown in Fig. 5-3, especially if the folders will not readily accept the standard stick-on labels. When variations are permitted, they should be applied as temporary measures only, and the standards prescribed herein should be adopted as soon as practical. The best time to do that is when new files are created or old ones are remade.

M. Preparing and Using Guide Cards, File Folders, and Labels (see Figures 5-3 thru 5-5).

1. Guide Cards. Prepare and use guide cards to identify each major file series or to identify and support portions of the series: type standard labels and attach them to the guide card tab; do not retire or discard file guides when files are disposed of, reuse them.

2. File Folders. Type identifying data on standard labels, positioning them on the folders as outlined in subsection M.3., below. When the material in any one folder reaches normal capacity of approximately three-fourths of an inch thickness, prepare another one. The second folder should begin at a logical point, such as the beginning of a month or a calendar quarter. Place folders behind related guides. A "dummy" file folder -- with a label that shows all the required disposition information but is not used to file documents -- may be used as the first folder in a record series. This saves repeating all the same information on the succeeding folders in that series, which require only the basic series number followed by the file name (See Fig.- 5-4).

3. Labels.

a. Preparation of Labels. Label all file folders to include the number, title, year file created, cutoff date, and disposition instructions. The exception is when a dummy file folder is used. Subtitles and commonly accepted abbreviations may be used:

101-05 Office Classified Document Receipt Files
(91) COFF Dec 31, 1991, DEST Jan 94

606-04 Staffing Policies and Programs
(90) COFF Dec 31, 90, PIF Jan 91
Transfer to the WNRC When Superseded

607-05.3 Legislation and Selective Policies Files
(91) COFF Dec 31, 91, PIF Jan 92
PERM Transfer to” the WNRC 96

b. Label Abbreviations. In addition to commonly used abbreviations, use the following in preparing labels:

CFA	Current Files Area
COFF	cutoff
DEST	Destroy
WNRc	Washington National Records Center (wNRC), Washington, D.C. 20409
NPRC	National Personnel Records Center, GSA (Civilian Personnel Records) 111 Winnebago St., St. Louis, Missouri 63118
National	Personnel Records GSA (Military Personnel Records) 9700 Page Boulevard, St. Louis, Missouri 63132
PERM	Permanent
PIF	Place in Inactive File
TRF	Transfer
RET	Retire
REFP	Reference Paper

N. **Preparing** Documents for **Filing****.** Files personnel shall:

1. Except for those documents obviously ready for filing, ensure that authorization for filing -- the word **"file"** and the initials of the authorizing official on the right side of the document-- has been obtained. File authorities are not required or necessary for documents that are self-identifying.

2. Ensure that each document set is complete and that enclosures or related papers are retained or accounted for.

3. Remove or destroy identical, duplicate copies of documents-before filing.

4. Remove all mail control forms, classified cover sheets, envelopes, and routing slips, except those containing remarks of significant record value.

5. Mend or reinforce torn or frayed papers with transparent tape.

6. Assemble related documents for filing, as indicated below, and file by **the date** of the latest action.

   a. The latest action on top.

   b. The basic paper.

   c. Endorsement, beginning with the earliest paper.

   d. Enclosures in numerical order.

   e. Supporting papers.

7. Staple related documents together in the upper left corner. When the material is too thick to use wire staples, use pronged fasteners to fasten related material.

8. Bring forward related documents, if appropriate. Combine documents of a later date that relate or refer to documents of an earlier date, only when reference to them is necessary. A reference to earlier document does not necessarily require that documents be combined. Do not combine:

   a. Recurring reports with the policy documents requiring such reports.

   b. Applications with the instructions governing their submission.

c. Documents on the same subject on different transactions, such as reports of inspection of two different organizations.

d. Use a cross-reference sheet for documents brought forward to maintain continuity.

O. Coding Documents for Filing. After documents have been prepared for filing, the next step is to code or categorize them. Coding segregates the papers into logical categories for ease of filing and finding. The OSD Component personnel shall adhere to the following guidelines for identifying documents to be filed:

1. Exercise care in determining their administrative, legal, and research value to the OSD and the WHS; their relationship to the organization; usefulness as archival documents; and the costs of keeping them." See Records Disposition Schedules, enclosure 4, and the office file plan for proper file code number.

2. In selecting a file number, first determine the functional series that represents the subject matter, and the specific subdivision.

3. Select the proper file designation by referring to the series and title descriptions listed in enclosure 4. (See Figure 5-3.)

4. Indicate the filing designation (file number) on the right margin of the document.

5. If the material being filed involves one or more subjects by which it may be requested, indicate the cross-reference file number for the additional subject by placing it below the file number shown for the major subject. The cross-reference is preceded by an "X" to distinguish it from the major subject file number and to indicate that it is a cross-reference.

P. Cross-Reference

1. Cross-references are made to locate documents promptly when they are needed. A cross-reference is a paper filed under one classification and date to show the location of material filed elsewhere.

2. Frequently an extra copy can be annotated to show where the original is located and then filed under the cross reference number. When this is not feasible, a blank sheet, conspicuously annotated to show the record copy location, may be used instead.

Q. Filing Procedures. The OSD Components shall:

1. Match the file designation of the papers with the folder labels before placing papers in the folders.

2. File papers loosely in the proper folder with the latest date in front, avoiding the use of pronged fasteners. Use pronged fasteners when the files are frequently used, when sequence of arrangement is of special importance, and when all documents pertain to the same transaction case or project.

3. Keep folder labels visible by neatly arranging papers in the folders. When the contents of the folder increase to the point that the papers begin to obscure folder labels, crease the bottom front of the folder. When contents of the folder reach three-fourths of an inch, make a new folder bearing the same file designation and place it in front of the full folder, showing inclusive dates on the folders.

4. Prevent" overcrowding files by allowing at least 4 inches of space in each active file drawer to permit sufficient working space.

5. Avoid cluttering the files. File bulky material separately in storage equipment suited to its size. Maintain this material in file classification, date, or serial number order. Make a cross-reference to the bulky material and annotate in a conspicuous location or with the filed papers. Mark the bulky material with storage location and file number to associate. it with related papers kept in the primary location.

R. Labeling File Drawers. File drawers shall be labeled to facilitate retrieval, and discretion used so that identification numbers of markings do not indicate the classifications of material stored therein. Only the major file series and inclusive dates of the material are indicated.

S. Chargeout Procedures. An SD-169 (OSD Records Chargeout) is prepared as a substitute for documents or other records borrowed or permanently withdrawn from the files. The chargeout card is placed in the subject folder at the exact place where the material was filed so that the "OUT" portion is visible. This facilitates identification of charged out files and expedites refiling them. When chargeout material is refiled, the entry on the form is lined out and-the form reused.

T. Classified Documents

1. Classified files shall be safeguarded in accordance

with DoD 5200. 1-R (reference (h)) .

2. The interfiling of unclassified and classified papers shall be restricted to those papers that directly support, explain, or document the record of the action or transaction.

3. Classified documents or other material shall be filed or stored in approved classified containers or secure areas appropriate with the classification of the material to be protected.

u. Files Cutoff Procedures

1. “Files cutoff” is the process of transferring a file from the active to the inactive state. Generally this is expressed as "COFF 31 Dec 91," followed by transfer or destruction information. Until the file “is transferred to a Federal Records Center or destroyed, it is held for reference only; no new documents will be added after the cut off” date. Inactive files must be kept separate from active ones to guard against misfiles. A new folder is put into the active files to replace the old one.

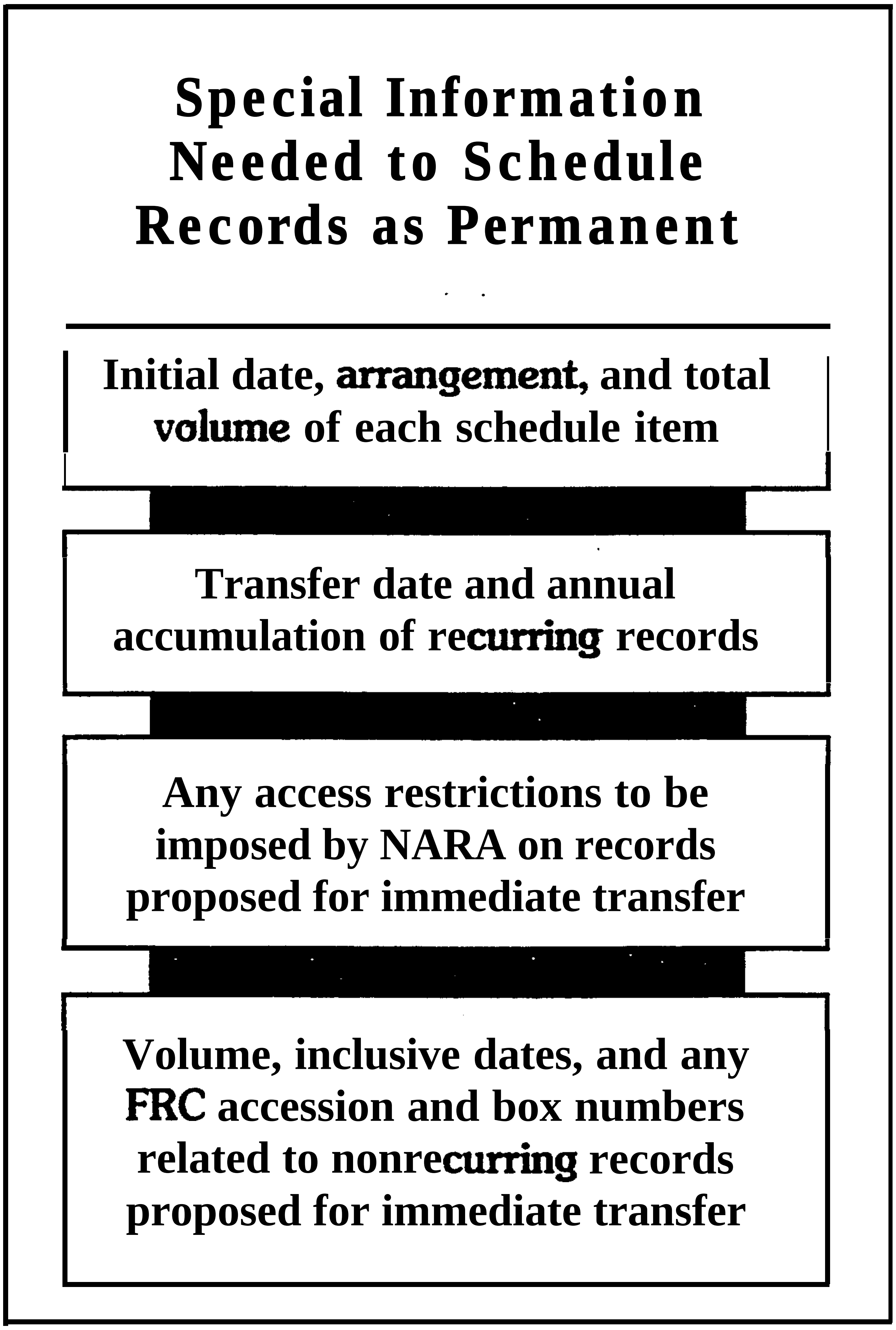
2. On an annual or fiscal year basis, whichever is appropriate, all offices shall cut off files and separate active from inactive; retire,- transfer, or destroy eligible material according to disposition procedures contained in enclosure 4; and review and destroy all duplicate or extraneous materials. Cut off:

a. Calendar year files on December 31.

b. Fiscal year files on September 30.

c. Files with a retention period of less than 1 year on a monthly or quarterly basis, as with chronological reading files, for example.

d. Files maintained as case or project files are cut off upon the occurrence of a certain event, such as separation of personnel, final contract payment, or project completion. Upon cutoff, move such files to an inactive file until they are eligible for destruction or transfer to a Records Center, in accordance with disposition procedures contained in enclosure 4.



Special Information Needed to Schedule Records as Permanent

Initial date, arrangement, and total volume of each schedule item

Transfer date and annual accumulation of recurring records

Any access restrictions to be imposed by NARA on records proposed for immediate transfer

Volume, inclusive dates, and any FRC accession and box numbers related to nonrecurring records proposed for immediate transfer

Figure 5-1

Special Information Needed to Schedule Records as Permanent

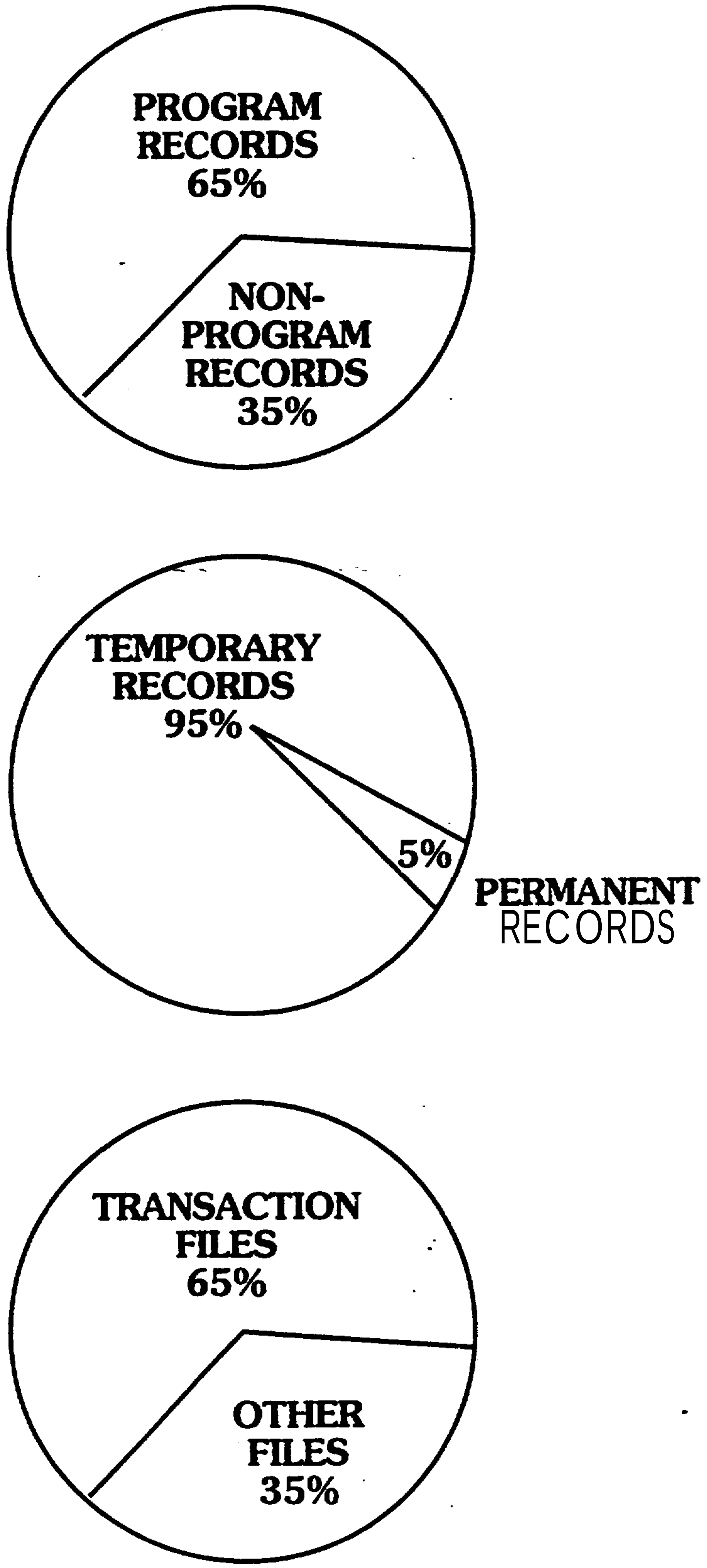
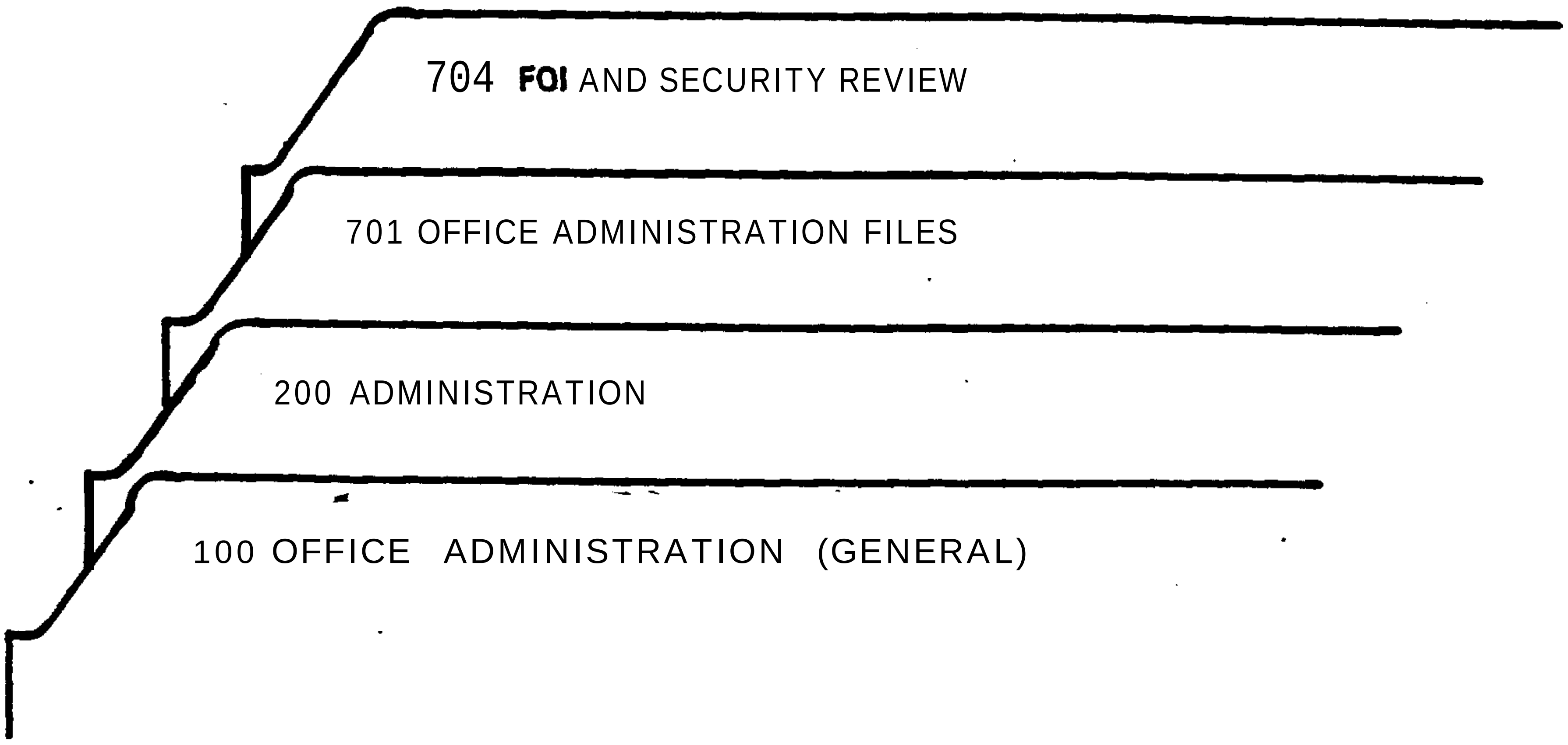


Figure 5-2

The Appraisal Process: Three Aspects of Federal Records


704 FOI AND SECURITY REVIEW
701 OFFICE ADMINISTRATION FILES
200 ADMINISTRATION
100 OFFICE ADMINISTRATION (GENERAL)

GUIDE CARD LABELS. **Breakdown** of guide cards is authorized if files within one **subfunctional** category **are** voluminous, e.g., **the 700** category (Public Affairs) is **further** divided **with guides** cards for 701,704, etc.

101-01 thru 101-20 (86)

Sample label entry for drawer that contains **two** or more record series. No disposition is shown **on** the label because it **varies** among the several record series in the drawer.

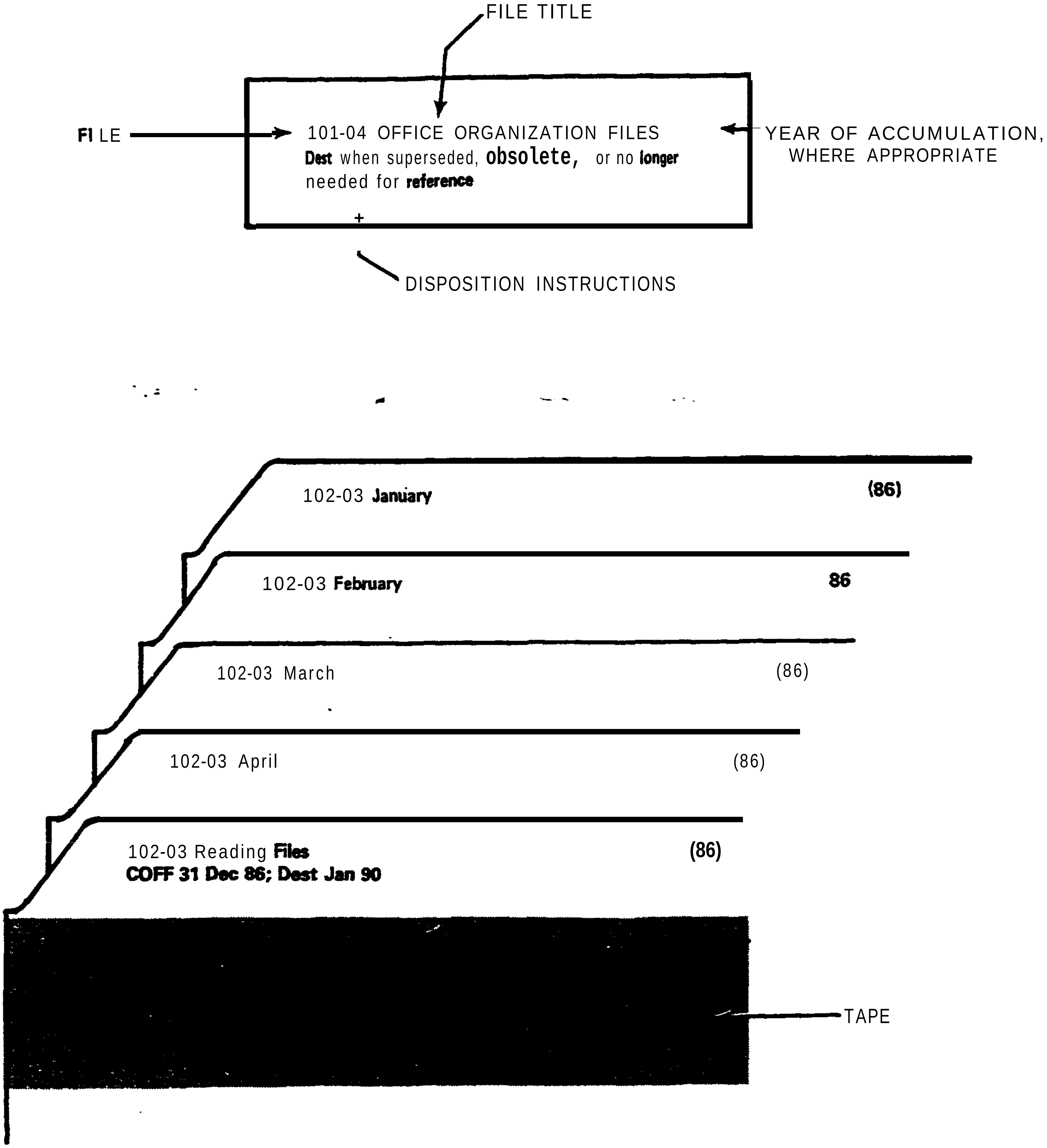
(86)

102-03 READING **FILES**
COFF 31 DEC 36
DEST JAN 90

Sample label **entry**, for drawer that **contains** one (and only one) record **series, and** contains *all* of that record series. Nota that drawer **label** is identical to folder **label** in this case.

Figure 5-3

Examples of Guide Card and Drawer Label Entries


FILE TITLE
FILE
101-04 OFFICE ORGANIZATION FILES
Dest when superseded, obsolete, or no longer needed for reference
YEAR OF ACCUMULATION, WHERE APPROPRIATE
DISPOSITION INSTRUCTIONS
102-03 January (86)
102-03 February 86
102-03 March (86)
102-03 April (86)
102-03 Reading Files (86)
COFF 31 Dec 86; Dest Jan 90
TAPE

USE OF “DUMMY” FOLDER. When there are several folders within one file number, a “dummy”’ file folder may be used as the first in the series. Tape it shut so thet no documents can be inadvertently filed in it Subsequent folder labels need only show the file number, contents and year of accumluation (if appropriate).

Figure 5-4

Samples of Label **Entries**

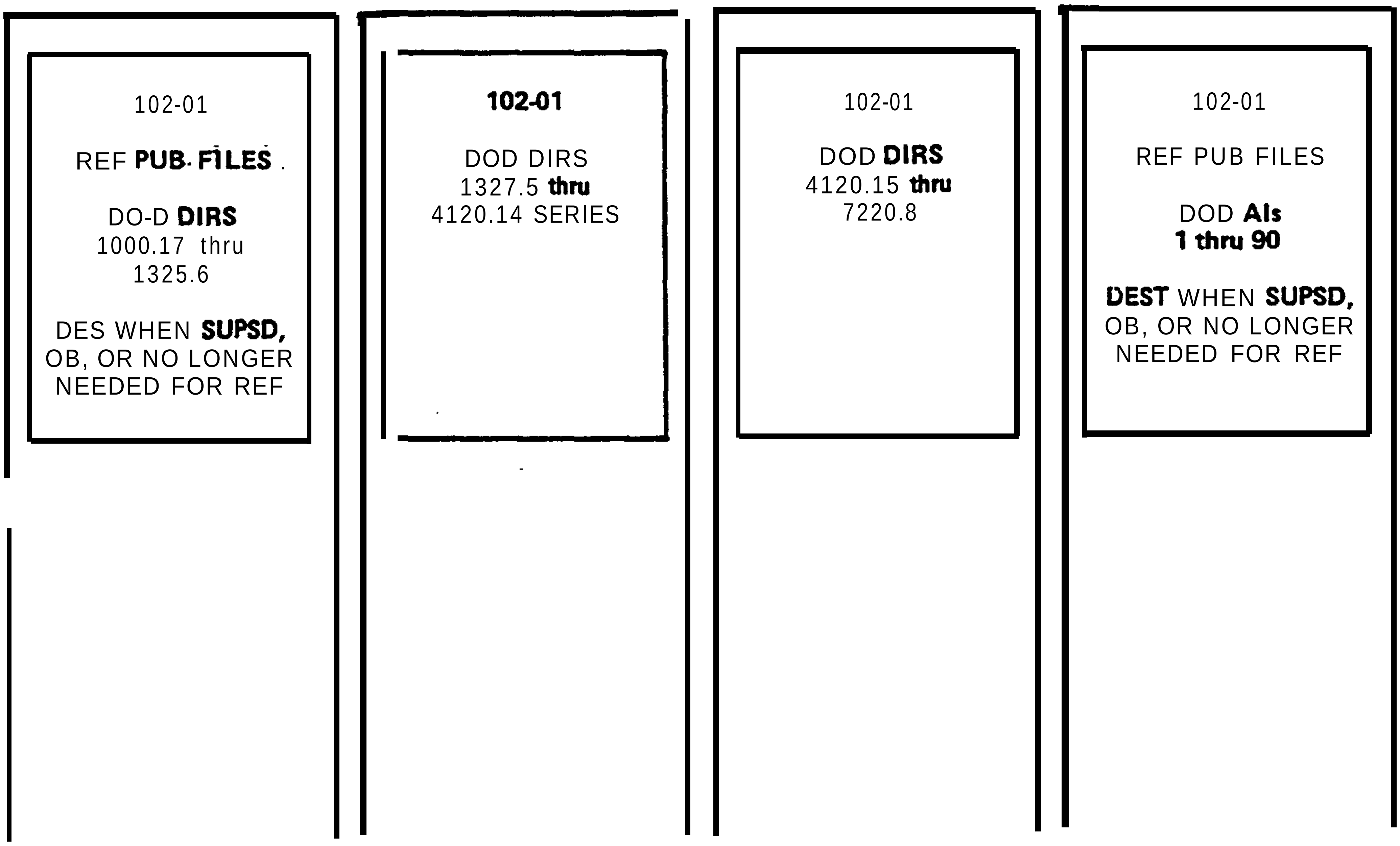

102-01
REF PUB FILES
DOD DIRS
1000.17 thru
1325.6
DES WHEN SUPSD,
OB, OR NO LONGER
NEEDED FOR REF
102-01
DOD DIRS
1327.5 thru
4120.14 SERIES
102-01
DOD DIRS
4120.15 thru
7220.8
102-01
REF PUB FILES
DOD AIs
1 thru 90
DEST WHEN SUPSD,
OB, OR NO LONGER
NEEDED FOR REF

Figure 5-5

Sample Label Entries for Binders
Containing Reference Publications